

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: DPI Media Line, (608) 266-3559, [media.inquiries@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:media.inquiries@dpi.wi.gov)

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## Investing in our public schools and libraries

*Testimony as prepared for delivery by State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly*

EAU CLAIRE – *The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction today released the following testimony, as prepared for delivery, to be provided at an upcoming Joint Committee on Finance listening session on the 2023-25 biennial budget. Gov. Tony Evers' budget proposal, released in February, [provides historic support of the state's public schools and libraries during a time of critical need.](#)*

Hello. I am Wisconsin State Superintendent Jill Underly, and as the leader of public education in this state, I am here to add my voice to the chorus of school staff, families, and community members advocating for increases in general aid and revenue limits for Wisconsin school districts.

The reality is that our districts are hurting right now. Districts are hurting because running schools costs money, and they do not have enough. They do not have enough because their one-time federal funds are set to expire. They do not have enough because they have not seen meaningful increases in general aid or revenue limits for far too long, especially when faced with inflationary costs. They do not have enough because they have to transfer funds – we're talking about millions of dollars – from their general funds to cover legally required special education services due to our state's abysmal reimbursement rate. They do not have enough because they are being asked to do so much more than ever before in responding to our youth mental health crisis, in addressing food insecurity, and in attracting and retaining staff in the face of workforce challenges across every sector of our economy.

Wisconsin districts do not have enough money, and when schools are underfunded, when schools are hurting, you know who gets hurt the most? Our kids. And that is unacceptable.

Despite all of this, I am hopeful. I am hopeful because we have a historic opportunity in this budget to robustly and meaningfully fund our public schools and libraries in Wisconsin, and I am hopeful because doing so will create lasting impact on the future of this state. What an incredible legacy you will leave when you pass this budget and support our public schools and libraries. What a difference you stand to make.

Thank you.

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**NOTE:** This news release is available electronically [on the Wisconsin DPI's news release webpage.](#)